

Teaching English Vocabulary for Children by Using Humanistic Approaches

Fitrah Yuliatwati
Universitas Islam Madura
fitrahyuliatwati@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

English is not only the subject matter that people have to know but English is also the international language to communicate in the world. This language is not for adults only because today children also speak English even in vocabulary only or short sentence. Why children have to know English? Is it easier for them? This question must be answer easily because children can learn or study English as adults. Children acquiring second languages in natural environments are more likely to eventually sound like native speakers than adults are. The central person who can teach English directly to the children at school is a teacher who has a lot of time with children. teacher can start by giving vocabulary to children. Why vocabulary? It is the simplest way to introduce English at the first time. Every single vocabulary can be put down on the thing like table, whiteboard, window, door, lamp, etc. And English is like another language, it is needing a practicing. And the more children using English in his/her activity the more they can improve their speaking ability so here the children have to be talk active at school. The focus of humanistic approaches here is on learning as a process rather than on immediate results and motivation is considered to come from inside, not from external reward. So different children tend to be intelligent in different ways and the using of humanistic approaches here is hopefully helps children reach their full potential in English.

Keywords: *vocabulary, children, humanistic approaches*

Introduction

Children are unique learners. The belief that children are better at language acquisition than adults is supported by both scientific and anecdotal evidence. Children acquiring second languages in natural environments are more likely to eventually sound like native speakers than adults are. Adults may appear to make greater progress initially, but children nearly always surpass them. Children under ten who experience enough natural communication in the target language nearly always succeed in attaining native-like proficiency, while those over fifteen rarely do, although they often come very close. Between these ages, about half are completely successful and about half are not (Heidi Dulay, 1982:78).

The assumption has been that adults do not learn languages as well as children because they are not able to. Research evidence shows, however, that the language environment typically provided for adult second language learners tends to be impoverished in the natural communication and the concrete referents which foster subconscious language learning.

Humanistic approach used to overcome some problem in teaching English for children. A lesson influenced by these approaches generally contains some or all of the following elements in David Paul (2003:5):

- The children are encouraged to develop people-to-people skills such as cooperation, fairness, and consideration for others.
- The focus is on learning as a process rather than on immediate results.
- The lessons allow each child to make her own choices and proceed at a pace that suits her best.
- The children are emotionally immersed in the lesson.
- Motivation is considered to come from inside, not from external reward.
- The emphasis is on learning English in natural context rather than breaking it up into discrete parts.
- The teacher ensures the children feel as little anxiety as possible.
- The teacher is a "facilitator" who steps back and encourages children to learn "naturally".

Problem Study

It is a fact that many teachers now find themselves difficult in teaching English in Primary school even though they have trained for this level.

Teacher believes that children are effortless learners and far superior in their eventual success. Since children are still in an intellectual stage of what Piaget (1972) called "concrete operations," it is need to remember their limitations. In Brown H Douglas (2001:88) since language lessons can at times be difficult for children, teacher should make them interesting, lively, and fun.

Method

According to Wendy a Scott in *Teaching English for Children* (page 33) some ways in teaching English to children:

1. Presenting new language orally
When children start learning English, they obviously need to be given language before they can produce it themselves. Language has to go in before it can come out. At this initial stage the activities will be under the control of the teacher. Here are just some of the ways you can present new language orally:
 - (a) The teacher knows what his or her pupils can do, so he or she says: 'listen to me, please. Maria can swim. Peter can sing. Miriam can ride a bike. Paula can whistle. Carlos can draw.' The sentences should be true and accompanied by the appropriate actions and sounds.
 - (b) One of the most successful ways of presenting language to young children is through puppets or a class mascot. Having 'someone' familiar constantly on hand with whom you can have conversations about anything and everything is a wonderful way of introducing new subjects and new language to young children.
 - (c) The using of simple line drawings on the board
2. Controlled practice
Controlled practice goes hand in hand with presentation since it is important that pupils try out new language as soon as they have heard it. In controlled practice there is very little chance that the pupils can make a mistake.
 - (a) Telling the time. Pupil A asks: what's the time? Pupil B answers: It's

(b) What’s he/she doing ?. Pupil A asks: what’s he/she doing? Pupil B answers: he’s/she’sing.

3. Guided practice

Guided practice follows on directly from controlled practice and will often be done either in pairs or in small groups. Guided practice usually gives the pupils some sort of choice, but the choice of language is limited.

(a) What’s the time?. The situation could be that pupil A’s watch has stopped and he or she wants to ask pupil B the time. This puts the language into context and the guided practice can become a mini-dialogue.

(b) Chain work. Chain works use picture cards or word cards. Put all the cards face down in a pile. Pupil 1 picks up a card on which there are some bananas. Turning to pupil 2 he or she says ‘Do you like bananas?’ pupil 2 then picks up the next card on which there are some apples and answers, ‘No, I don’t like bananas, but I like apples.’ Pupil 2 turns to pupil 3 and says, ‘Do you like apples?’ to which pupil 3 replies. ‘No, I don’t like apples, but I like’ And so on.

4. Dialogues and role play work

Working with dialogues is a useful way to bridge the gap between guided practice and freer activities. Controlled dialogues can easily develop into freer work when the pupils are ready for it. Putting pupils into pairs for doing the dialogues is a simple way of organizing even large classes.

(a) Using objects. Here are two dialogues which show how physical movements or objects can make a dialogue come alive for young children, and give it an amusing communicative purpose.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What have you got in your pocket? - I’m not telling you - Oh, please? - O.K. It’s a frog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What have you got in your pocket? - I’m not telling you. - They don’t!
---	--

Clearly, there is a lot more involved in these exchanges than language alone, and you may find that you want to act them out in the mother tongue first.

(b) Role play. Another way of presenting dialogues is through role play. In role play the pupils are pretending to be someone else like the teacher, or a shop assistant, or one of their parents, etc. for young children you should go from the structured to the more open type of activity.

Dialogues and role play are useful oral activities because:

1. Pupils speak in the first and second person. Texts are often in the third person.
2. Pupils learn to ask as well as answer.
3. They learn to use short complete bits of language and to respond appropriately.
4. They don’t just use words, but also all the other parts of speaking a language-tone of voice, stress, intonation, facial expressions, etc.
5. They can be used to encourage natural ‘chat’ in the classroom, making up dialogues about the little things which have happened and which occupy the children at the moment.

5. Free activities

Using controlled and guided activities which have choices wherever possible provides a good background for activities where children say what they want to say. Some characteristics of free activities:

1. They focus attention on the message/content and not on the language as such, although the language will usually be limited by the activity itself.
2. There is genuine communication even though the situations are sometimes artificial. In a way, everything we do in the classroom is artificial-to prepare pupils for their lives outside the classroom.
3. Free activities will really show that pupils can or cannot use the language.
4. Free activities concentrate on meaning more than on correctness. Formal mistakes don’t really matter too much unless it means your pupils can’t be understood.
5. Teacher control is minimal during the activity, but the teacher must be sure that the pupils have enough language to do the task.
6. The atmosphere should be informal and non-competitive. All pupils ‘win’.
7. There is often a game element in the activity.

- (a) Pair works. First let's look at some pair work activities. Remember that quite a lot of pair work activities can be done very simply in class by making half the class turn their backs to the teacher/overhead projector/blackboard, and making sure that all the pupils who have their backs to you have partners who are facing you.
- (b) Group work.
- Take any picture story from your textbook or workbook, copy it, cut it up and give one picture to each member of the group. Each pupil then has to describe to the others what is in his or her picture without showing it to the others. When the pupils have heard what is in all the pictures, the group decides on the correct order of the pictures.
 - Another story-telling exercise which needs a bit more imagination and is most suitable for the eight to ten year olds at level two is where everyone in the group has two objects or pictures of objects which have to be woven into a story.

Whole class activities. In these activities all the pupils get up and walk about. Inevitably, they tend to be a bit noisy, and if you have more than thirty pupils in your class, you should spill them into smaller group.

Conclusion

As another language learner, children have their own position to reach their own success. Children are focused on what this new language can actually be used for here and now. They are less willing to put up with language that doesn't hold immediate rewards for them. Children are good at sensing language that is not authentic; therefore, "canned" or stilted language will likely be rejected. Language needs to be firmly context embedded. A whole language approach is essential (if language is broken into too many bits and pieces, students won't see the relationship to the whole. And stress the interrelationships among the various skills or they won't see important connections.

References

- Dulay Heidi, Burt Marina, Krashen Stephen. 1982. *Language two*. The English Language Teaching Department Oxford University Press, New York.
- Scott Wendy A, Ytberg Lisbeth H. 1995. *Teaching English to Children*. London New York, Longman.
- Brown H Douglas. 2001. *Teaching by Principles (An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy)*. Pearson Education, 10 Bank Street, White Plains, NY 10606.
- Paul David. 2003. *Teaching English to Children in Asia*. Pearson Education Asia Limited, Hong Kong.